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TIMOTHY J. WALZ
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VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Oversight

March 26, 2007

The Honorable Harry Mitchell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am deeply troubled by recent news reports about poor care and substandard conditions at certain veterans' homes throughout the United States.

At the Minneapolis Veterans' Home for example, three veterans recently died after staff administered the wrong medication and neglected to properly monitor a patient's blood sugar. State inspectors cited the home with 34 rules violation in 2006, seven more than in 2005. Inspectors reported that staff members fed residents cold food, did not take basic steps to prevent residents from falling, and failed to protect against needle contamination. Federal inspectors criticized the home in February and threatened to cut off federal funding for the home, which provides about 20 percent of its revenue.

Reports of conditions at the Minneapolis Veterans' Home and other veterans' homes nationwide indicate a pattern of unacceptably poor care at veterans' homes that demands our attention. While the level of federal funding varies from one veterans' home to the next, it is clear that we must exercise our oversight responsibility over any veterans' home facility that receives federal funds.

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully request that you hold a hearing of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to investigate the quality of care at veterans' homes like the one in Minneapolis and the extent to which the Department of Veterans Affairs is investigating conditions at these homes.

America's veterans deserve the best medical treatment and care available. Congress must ensure they receive nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim P. Walz", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tim Walz
Member of Congress